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ABSTRACT

Compulsivity and obsessiveness are vaguely defined terms which include a broad range of behaviors and cognitions that have been elusive to quantify. To introduce the 22-item Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (OCS) and to perform preliminary validation studies, 114 (46 male, 68 female) college students and 57 counseling clients completed the OCS on two separate occasions. To determine test validity, the Orderliness Scale of the Comrey Personality Scales and the Change Scale of the Adjective Check List (ACL) were also administered. Further validation was obtained from psychologists' assessment of the 57 clients and ratings of the participants by roommates. An analysis of the results showed that the OCS had a modest level of reliability and promising concurrent validity. Correlations with the ACL and the Comrey Order Scale also were within the modest range. No differences between means were found for sex or client versus student subgroups. Further validation studies and the development of norms is recommended. (The OCS and tables presenting the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the OCS with other measures are appended.) (BL)

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The Development and Testing of An Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Instrument

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The Development and Testing of An Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Instrument

James R. Bailey, Thomas T. Lambirth
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Compulsivity and obsessiveness are vaguely defined terms which include a broad range of behaviors and cognitions that have been elusive to quantify. Buros (1974) has not listed a single instrument to measure these traits. Although in an early version of the Strong Vocational Interest Blank (Strong, 1959) an attempt was made to use the "Accountancy Scale" as a measure of compulsivity, that effort proved fruitless because the compulsivity cluster item intercorrelations were low (Campbell, 1971). Additionally, attempts to derive compulsivity scores from the MMPI have not been well received, as the MMPI was not designed to measure that trait (Finney, 1965; 1966a,b; 1968). The purpose of this study was to introduce the development and preliminary validation of the Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (OCS) which was designed specifically to measure the degree of an individual's compulsivity.

METHOD

Subjects.

Participants in the first group were 46 male and 68 female undergraduates enrolled in an introductory psychology course at a large midwestern university. They were given extra course credit for their participation. A second group of respondents consisted of 57 individuals seeking therapeutic counseling for approximately 1 hour per week. The range of time during which clients had been in therapy was from one to 24 months (M = 7.61, SD = 5.94). The services of two licensed clinical psychologists were also enlisted. There was no renumeration for the participation of the psychologists.

OCS.

The Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (OCS) prepared by the investigation contains 22 items responded to as true/false, selected from an original pool of 68 items.

- -

Insert Table 1 about here.

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Ten items are scored positively if responded to in the affirmative; and 10 scored positively if responded to in the negative, thus a score between 0 and 20 for an hypothesized compulsivity construct is possible. The remaining 2 items are a subscale for validity or invalidity of responding.

Procedure.

The OCS and the Orderliness Scale of the Comrey Personality Scales (Comrey, 1970) were administered to 114 undergraduates. Three weeks later 77 of the original 114 participants were re-administered the OCS, this time with the Change Scale of the Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrun, 1980). The purpose of procedure was to establish test-retest reliability and an indication

of the degree of relationship between the OCS and other measures of personality.

Validation for the OCS was obtained by having 57 clients complete the OCS, while clinicians provided a second criterion measure by assessing the degree of each client's obsessive-compulsive traits along a 7 point Likert-type scale ranging from flexible personality to extreme obsessive-compulsive traits. Clinicians determined their evaluations without the knowledge of how a particular client scored on the OCS. Clinical ratings were then correlated with client scores on the OCS.

Further validation for the OCS was obtained from co-inhabitants of the undergraduate participants who were asked to judge the degree of obsessive-compulsiveness of their roommates. Co-inhabitants evaluated their roommates on a modified version of the OCS which was altered to eliminate unobservable behaviors and to reflect the third person singular. The OCS scores for participants were then correlated with roommate evaluations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the OCS with other measures, are given in Tables 2 and 3. The test-retest reliability coefficient of +.82 ($p < .0001$) indicated that the OCS exhibits what appears to be considered at least a modest level of reliability. The correlation between clinicians' evaluations and clients' scores on the OCS was +.79 ($p < .0001$), and the correlation between participants' OCS scores and roommate evaluations was +.45 ($p < .0001$). Relative to the criterion measures employed, the OCS showed promising concurrent validity. It was expected that clinical ratings would be correlated with OCS scores to a greater degree than would roommate evaluations, as clinicians are more highly trained and experienced in the assessment of personality than are undergraduate students.

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here.

No differences between means were found of subsamples differentiated by sex on the OCS (F 1/112 = .26), or between average scores of client and student subgroups (F 1/171 = .18).

To provide a measure of internal consistency, in terms of the correlation of an item with total score, point biserial item correlations were calculated for each item on the OCS. Presented in Table 4, these data indicate that for every item on the OCS the probability of the occurance of a coefficient as large as the one found or larger was less than .02.

Insert Table 4 about here.

In determining the relationship between the OCS and the measure of either rigidity or order (components of obsessive-compulsive behavior), scores on the OCS were correlated with scores on: (a) the ACL Change Scale (r = -.52, p < .0001), and (b) the Comrey Order Scale (r = +.58, p < .0001). The Comrey instrument was scored for order, whereas the ACL was scored for flexibility.

Although only limited data are presently available for the newly developed OCS, this study has shown that it may be a useful research/clinical instrument in the assessment of compulsive personality. Future directions should be aimed at establishing norms for a wide variety of populations such as Gamblers Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous groups.

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Footnotes

[1]Requests for reprints should be addressed to Gerald D. Gibb, Department of Psychology, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois 61920.

[2]Last two authors are listed solely on the basis of alphabetical order.

Table 1

The Obsessive-Compulsive Scale

	T-F
1. I feel compelled to do things I don't want to do.	
2. I usually check things that I know I have already done.	
3. I can walk 30 miles in an hour.	
4. I often do things I don't want to do because I can not resist doing them.	
5. I seldom keep a daily routine.	
6. I feel compelled to always complete what I am doing.	
7. I often feel the need to double check what I do.	
8. I'd rather do things the same way all the time.	
9. I seldom have recurring thoughts.	
10. I seldom am compelled to do something I don't want to do.	
11. I don't feel uncomfortable and uneasy when I don't do things my usual way.	
12. If I don't feel like doing something it won't bother me not to do it.	
13. I usually never feel the need to be organized.	
14. I am uneasy about keeping a rigid time schedule.	
15. My birthday comes once a year.	
16. I am often compelled to do some things I do not want to do.	
17. I like to keep a rigid daily routine.	
18. I believe there is a place for everything and everything in its place.	
19. I seldom check things I know I have already done.	
20. I am not obsessed with details.	
21. I often have recurring thoughts.	
22. I like to do things differently each time.	

*Note.---Items 1,2,4,6,7,8,16,17,18 and 21, are scored for compulsivity if answered true.

Items 5,9,10,11,12,13,14,19,20,and 22, are scored for compulsivity if answered false.

Items 3 and 15 are validity check items.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Analysis of Sex Differences on the Obsessive-Compulsive Scale

Group	N	M	SD	df	F	p
Undergraduate Males	46	11.15	3.72	1/112	.26	ns
Undergraduate Females	68	11.24	4.14			
Combined	114	11.22	3.96			
Clients	57	11.51	4.47			

Table 3

Correlations of the Obsessive-Compulsive Scale with other measures

	N	r[c]
ACL Change Scale[a]		
Combined	77	-.52
Males	34	-.34
Females	43	-.57
Comrey Order Scale[b]		
Combined	114	+.58
Males	46	+.53
Females	68	+.60
OCS		
Combined	77	+.82
Males	34	+.83
Females	43	+.80
Roommate Evaluations	68	+.45
Clinician Evaluations	57	+.79

Note. - [a]Scored for flexibility.

[b]Scored for order.

[c]All correlations exceed $p<.0001$

Table 4

Point Biserial Item Correlations for the Obsessive-Compulsive Scale

(Item-Total Score Correlation Coefficients)

Item No.	r	p
1	.36	.0001
2	.62	.0001
3	---	-----
4	.22	.02
5	.54	.0001
6	.30	.001
7	.52	.0001
8	.55	.0001
9	.24	.009
10	.41	.0001
11	.60	.0001
12	.28	.002
13	.37	.0001
14	.40	.0001
15	---	-----
16	.320	.0006
17	.62	.0001
18	.45	.0001
19	.45	.0001
20	.54	.0001
21	.30	.001
22	.49	.0001